NORTHERN ISLANDER

$5.00

DECEMBER 2025

# EDWARD B. WOJAN PARK HONORS COMMUNITY SERVICE IN 50 YEAR REAL ESTATE CAREER

READ MORE ON PAGE 4

# THANK YOU TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS, ADVERTISERS, CONTRIBUTORS, AND THE NORTHERN ISLANDER TEAM FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR IN PRINT

## THE ELKS MAKE GREAT STRIDES IN THE COMMUNITY

Elks Lodge #2886 is investing in the community through grants that support youth, elders, Veterans, and families. This includes free dental care in 2026 for children and residents 80+, plus support for the Food Pantry and new Veteran programs. The Lodge also continues youth outreach with the 2025 Hoop Shoot.

Read more on pages 20 & 21.

## TOWNSHIPS CAPTURE A YEAR IN REVIEW

Read the Peaine Township 2025 review on page 25.

Read the St. James Township 2025 review on page 31.

## FIBER INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANDS: NEW MIDDLE-MILE PROJECT SPURS CAMPGROUND CHANGES

Read more on page 6.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS: CHRISTMAS EVENTS, CONCERTS, AND FESTIVITIES

Find local holiday event happenings on page 18.

BEAVER ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Established 1957
Keeping Island History Alive

NORTHERN ISLANDER

is proudly owned and published by the
*Beaver Island Historical Society*

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Happy holidays!

As we near the end of 2025, the Northern Islander team would like to take a moment to honor another successful year in print and in the community. We are deeply grateful to be the team that gathers, curates, and delivers local news right to your doorstep. Our articles are written by the community you know and love, about the community you know and love, and it remains a privilege to help document the stories that shape life on Beaver Island.

This year brought twelve more months of meaningful reporting, heartfelt stories, historic moments, and photographs that capture the spirit of island life. We hope these pages not only kept you informed but offered the warmth of connection, a well-earned smile, and a reason to feel proud of the place we call home.

We also want to extend a special acknowledgment to the advertisers who help keep us in print. Every advertisement you see in these pages represents a local business, organization, or initiative that supports the continuation of independent journalism on Beaver Island. Their contributions make it possible for us to write, print, and distribute the news you rely on. We appreciate their partnership more than we can express.

To our contributors (those who regularly submit stories, photos, history, event summaries, and letters) thank you. Your perspectives enrich the narrative of island life and ensure that many voices are heard. You help preserve local storytelling and keep small-town news not only alive, but thriving.

And to our loyal readers, as well as those picking up an issue for the very first time, please know how valued you are by the Northern Islander team. Because of you, we have the honor of weaving together the monthly tapestry of island stories. Keep reading, keep sharing, and keep encouraging others to discover what we have to offer. We do this for you.

Thank you as well for the thoughtful notes, emails, and conversations we receive throughout the year. Your messages inspire us, challenge us, and remind us why this work matters. Every word of encouragement helps make each edition better than the last and reinforces the impact local journalism has on this remarkable community.

So thank you, each and every one of you, for supporting the Northern Islander and for being part of this story.

Best wishes,
Elsie Burton
Editor of the Northern Islander

*Annual Subscription Rates*

| | |
|---|---|
| Print Only (In-State) | **$50.00** |
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| Digital Only | **$48.00** |
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*Bonus!*

As a thank you for giving the gift of Northern Islander News this holiday season, every gifted subscription includes an optional 'happy holidays' feature on the Northern Islander website!

Merry Christmas

NORTHERN ISLANDER

**To set up a gift subscription, visit or call the Beaver Island Historical Society at (231) 448-2254**

# PRINT SHOP PERSPECTIVE

*By Lori Taylor-Blitz*

***Since 1957, The Beaver Island Historical Society has been working to keep Beaver Island History Alive! We advance this goal through a mission of preserving and sharing the unique history of Beaver Island and the Archipelago.***

Greetings Readers,

As the holiday season wraps around our island, we want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to our community. Your continued support, whether through reading, sharing, volunteering, or donating, keeps our local stories alive and ensures that the voices of Beaver Island are heard. Your generosity helps sustain our work and fuel the stories yet to be told.

This year has required a bit of creativity and resilience. Like many community organizations, we've tightened our belts to navigate a slimmer grant economy. While resources may be leaner, our commitment to celebrating our island's spirit has never been stronger. Every story we print, every local accomplishment we highlight, is a tribute to the remarkable people who make this community so special.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are excited to launch a new initiative: Incredible Islanders. This program will shine a spotlight on the people who make a difference—those whose achievements, big or small, shape our island's identity. From longtime residents to newcomers making their mark, we will continue to celebrate the talent, dedication, and heart of Beaver Island.

As we enjoy the holidays and reflect on the year gone by, we are deeply thankful for each of you. Your support sustains this paper, strengthens our community, and allows us to keep telling the stories that matter. Here's to a joyful season and a bright year ahead—together, we will continue to honor the incredible people who call this island home.

Happy Holidays,
Lori Taylor-Blitz

P.S. I look forward to visiting with our readers who attend the Holiday Social on Friday, December 5 at the Print Shop Museum.

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# GRANTS AND GENEROSITY ILLUMINATE LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION

*By Lori Taylor-Blitz*

We are overjoyed to share that the Beaver Island Historical Society has received a $5,000 grant from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation's Geographical Cycle to support our devoted lighthouse volunteers in completing the vestibule project at the historic Beaver Head Lighthouse. This wonderful gift, together with an additional $6,000 from generous anonymous donors for other vital lighthouse repairs, will help ensure that this cherished landmark continues to shine for generations to come.

The Beaver Head Lighthouse has always been a symbol of our island's maritime heritage, and its preservation is a testament to the incredible dedication of our volunteers. Over the years, these remarkable individuals have poured their hearts into restoring the tower, caring for the grounds, and sharing its rich history with visitors. Their passion and hard work have transformed the lighthouse into a vibrant center of history and pride for our community.

We are especially grateful to the students from Eastern Michigan University. The Historic Preservation Field School has offered invaluable hands-on support with restoration, and the 2025 graduate student researchers delved into the history of our lighthouse keepers, producing two new interpretive posters. These posters will be on display in the new outdoor kiosk next season, providing visitors with a deeper understanding of the lives and legacies of those who tended the light.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our lighthouse volunteers, 'Beaver Island Southies', who not only donated their time and talent to bring this project to life but also generously purchased the materials needed for the display. The combination of their dedication and the support of our grantors and donors ensures that the Beaver Head Lighthouse will continue to shine as a beacon of history, education, and community spirit. We warmly invite everyone to visit and celebrate the incredible legacy of our island lighthouse.

# A LIFETIME OF SERVICE RECOGNIZED: NEW PARK NAMED FOR EDWARD B. WOJAN

*By Brittney Rittof*

Edward B. Wojan was recently honored with the naming of Beaver Island's new public beach expansion on the harbor. Thanks to the collaboration of Township leaders and island benefactors, Edward B. Wojan Park, an extension of Jewell F. Gillespie Park will offer greater beach access for residents, visitors, and everyone in between to enjoy the natural beauty of Beaver Island.

This dedication recognizes not only Ed's focused two-year effort to make this project a reality, but also his nearly 50 years of public service. Over the decades, Wojan has facilitated the purchase of 75–80 private parcels for public ownership. His work has benefited St. James and Peaine Townships, Charlevoix County, the State of Michigan, Central Michigan University, the Dark Sky Sanctuary, the Rural Health Center, the Transfer Station, and many more community assets.

A fifth-generation islander, Mr. Wojan was born in 1947. His mother's family, the McDonough's, arrived in the 1850s, and his father's family came in the 1930s. He earned a degree in finance from the University of Detroit, along with coursework in business law and marketing, graduating in 1969. The following year, he and his wife Connie returned to Beaver Island. A few years later, he and Bill Cashman created what became known as the most reliable, comprehensive, map of the island. In 2006, he collaborated with Cashman's son, Jeff, to produce the second Wojan–Cashman map.

On the day of the dedication, a looming threat of rain added to Mr. Wojan's nerves. "I've been talking to people all my life," he said with a laugh. "I was extremely nervous and jittery, and I've never been like that. I've always spoken off the cuff, but this one had so many details. I felt like I had to print it out and read it. First time I'd ever done that in my life!" Fortunately, the skies stayed clear, and Mr. Wojan delivered his remarks.

In his speech, he recounted the history of Jewell F. Gillespie Park and the "monstrous project" of securing the second section of beach in 2003, a process that took two years. Between 2022 and 2024, the final three parcels were acquired, bringing the total public beachfront to 724.28 feet.

Although the Township voted unanimously to name the new section in his honor, Mr. Wojan is quick to emphasize that the last 450-plus feet of beachfront were not secured by him alone. "St. James Township Supervisor, Bobbi Welke did a tremendous amount of work, finishing the grants, handling the paperwork, working with the State to sort everything out. Former St. James Supervisor, Kitty McNamara planted the seed by saying this should be a public beach. Erin McDonough was critically helpful in getting the support of the Natural Resources Trust Fund."

Still many, including Supervisor Welke, have expressed that this honor recognizes far more than his work on the beach extension. It reflects a lifetime of dedication to the island.

In his speech, Mr. Wojan compared the moment to a movie star receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award, though he emphasized that his true goal was simply to create a safe, welcoming beachfront for islanders and visitors. "It'll make a fantastic, big stretch of shallow, pure-sand bottom frontage for people to use, something most other communities don't have and that makes me proud, it really does," he said.

Beaver Island Performing Arts Alliance

# HOLIDAY CANDLELIGHT CONCERT

A Holiday Candlelight Concert will be held at the Beaver Island Community Center on December 17 at 6:00 p.m. This is a free event, a thank you to the island community for their continuing support, from the Beaver Island Performing Arts Alliance.
A string quartet will play seasonal favorites and there might even be some sing-along tunes! The quartet includes Adam Lieberman on first violin, Ann Marie Jones on second violin, Kim Teachout on viola, and Lynne Tobin on cello. They will be playing at the school the following morning. Be sure to plan on attending this enchanted evening!

# Tried and True Family Favorite Recipes

## Wini McDonough's White Cookies

Submitted by Rach Becker

Each month, we will feature recipes that are sure to have you coming back for seconds. These are the recipes that we grew up with and still make today.

Winifred (LaFreniere) McDonough was the seventh of eight children born to Nels and Sophia (Boyle) LaFreniere on Beaver Island. Sophia was native to the island, and Nels and his father, Narcisse, famously walked across the ice from the mainland around the turn of the 1900s.

Wini and Lawrence married in 1939 and raised six children: Gary, Larry, Joe, Kevin, Kathie, and Pam. They ran a dairy farm on Carlisle Road, close to their home, where Stoney Acre Grill stands today. Kids from across the island would gather to jump from the loft into bales of hay, and the family produced the first pasteurized milk on Beaver Island.

Wini had a lifelong love of baking. On Saturdays, her children woke to the smell of fresh-baked bread, and each Christmas she prepared a variety of cookies passed down through generations of island families since the earliest Irish settlers. The recipe that follows, shared with Wini by Theresa Gallagher, is one of those beloved holiday traditions.

Wini and Lawrence lived in Charlevoix for several years before returning to Beaver Island in 2001.

Make these cookies to share with family and friends this holiday season.

Blasta! (Irish for delicious)

**Ingredients:**

- Ingredients
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup buttermilk
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups Crisco
- 3 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 large eggs
- 5–6 cups flour

**Instructions:**

Beat sugar and Crisco until creamy.
In a separate cup, add baking soda to the buttermilk and let sit until foamy.
Beat eggs and vanilla into the buttermilk mixture, then add to the sugar mixture and blend well.
In another bowl, mix flour with baking powder and salt. Add dry ingredients to the batter a little at a time until dough is no longer sticky.
Refrigerate overnight. Roll out dough, cut with cookie cutters, and decorate as desired.
Bake at 375° for about 10 minutes.


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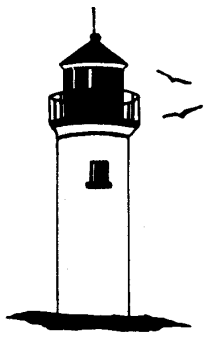

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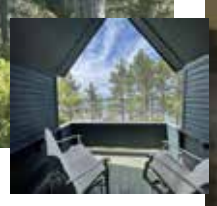
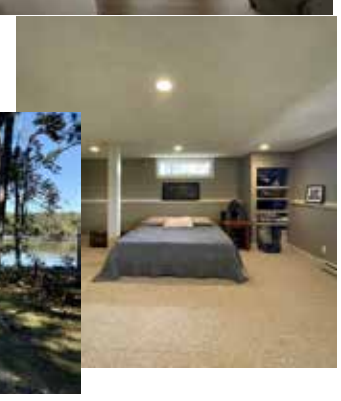


**The Butz Home – 26900 Whitetail Trail**

Beautiful like new home near the tip of Hemlock Point. This three bedroom, 2 and ½ bath house with just over 2800 sq. ft. of finished area on 3 levels was started by an original owner, but finished inside in its entirety by the current owners. The inside finishing has been impeccably done with the very best of materials. You have to see the inside of this home to appreciate its value and nice lay-out. It has a view of almost 100% of the main part of Lake Geneserath. The exterior walls are almost a foot thick for very easy, comfortable year-round use. The house is in excellent condition and superbly placed. There will never be another house placed near this home. The very best part offering is the land that comes with it and its value. There are five lots (units) of the Whitetail Point Condominiums with the house. (Lots 2, 3, 4, 17 and 18) The two lots behind the house are 17 and 18 and have frontage on the North Arm of the Lake. These lots have a dock and a boat launch private to this offering. Keep your boats at the dock or on your trailer ready to be put in. The land value of these five lots is a minimum of $375,000. Lots 3 and 4 are a single building site with a well and (we think) a septic system already in place. You could build another house on these two extra lots to have a family compound set up. This house with its five lots gives an owner all kinds of options. The house comes with almost all of its furnishings and equipment for turn-key ready use. The five lakefront lots and this remarkable house is a good buy at the asking price of **$775,000.**



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# CONNECTING PENINSULA FIBER NETWORK FIBER TO BEAVER ISLAND

*By Bobbi Welke, St. James Township Supervisor*

Peninsula Fiber Network's (PFN) project, funded by a federal grant, is providing infrastructure for connecting better broadband between Michigan's peninsulas. This project is bringing a middle-mile fiber optic cable between the upper and lower peninsulas (at Gulliver and Charlevoix, respectively) with a section constructed on Beaver Island. PFN and St. James Township have been in continuous conversation about how best to support PFN's project and the needs of Beaver Island.

The St. James Township Board is making the most of this opportunity to connect the underwater fiber to an underground location at the township campground which allows the Board to expand its campsites and features within the campground. The Township has hired Simple Life Tree Care, LCC, an island company to remove trees to accommodate the campground's growth. This is why you see the trees west of the Campground Road being removed.

To complete the Campground's expansion, the following projects have been planned:

The road leading into the campground, managed by the Charlevoix County Road Commission, is planned to be straightened, widened, and graded. The county has approved the removal of trees along this route to create a 22-foot-wide road. This upgrade resulted in a two-lane gravel road for the campground.

The Township Board has authorized clearing one acre of trees west of the campground road, approximately 200 feet from the bluff edge. The felled trees will be chipped, with the chips left on-site for future trail development within the Township, including at the campground and other potential trail locations. Gravel will be brought to the site to create the road and parking areas for the new rustic campground. Any leftover gravel will be stored elsewhere on the campground property for future township use. The Beaver Island Wildlife Club has graciously agreed to consider assisting the campground project during the site restoration activities in spring 2027, by planting new trees for screening and natural aesthetics, using trees supplied by the Charlevoix County Conservation District.

The township's campground engineer has conducted a site visit to design the conceptual layout of the proposed rustic campground and explore compliant options for safe travel up and down the bluff, adhering to permitting and environmental regulations related to the bluff and Lake Michigan. Larger RVs will be accommodated in this new campground, limited only by the maximum size allowed on the ferry. Previously, only campers up to 25 feet long were permitted due to the narrow access road with a sharp curve next to the start of the bluff.

Next Action: The engineering firm will complete a conceptual layout of the rustic campground later this month. After Board approval, this draft layout will be shared with the community for seeking input. Once the layout is approved, the Board will work with the Wildlife Club to seek their ideas about and involvement with a tree planting program as well as ideas regarding interpretive signage covering island forests.

# BEAVER ISLAND WILDLIFE CLUB NEWS

*By Jacque LaFreniere*

A wonderful dinner was served at the Shamrock for the annual Harold Lounsberry Memorial Hunter's Dinner. A spread including venison, bison, turkey, whitefish, and seafood was offered buffet style to the more than 90 folks in attendance. Everyone ate well, told stories about what they saw, or didn't see, and had a good time.

**RAFFLES BEGAN BEFORE 7 P.M., AND THE BIG WINNERS WERE:**

- Steve Zoran won the Card Gun Raffle with the 8 of clubs. He won a Remington Model 700 6mm rifle with scope and ammunition donated by Phil Wyckoff.
- Bob Turner won the Rifle Raffle—a Ruger .308 bolt action with scope.
- Scott Welke won the ½-day fishing charter with Kelly Day Charters.

The Dowling Camp and Swearingen Camp each donated prizes for the raffle, and they were all distributed (too many to mention here). Thank you to both camps for the prizes!

*Pictured: Lily Warmerdam*

*Pictured: Steve Zoran*

*Pictured: Vaughn Siller*

**OTHER PRIZES THAT THE CLUB PURCHASED AND WINNERS INCLUDED:**

- A Buck knife — Dennis Reilly, Jr.
- A binocular/rangefinder combo — Tim Warmerdam
- Trail cameras — Tom Bobovski
- Hunter's backpack filled with goodies — Doug Dowling
- Rod and reel — Mark Holobaugh

**THE KIDS ALSO HAD A RAFFLE OF THEIR OWN, AND THE WINNERS WERE:**

- Daisy BB Gun — Leeland Beers, who also won the $50 cash prize and donated it back to the club
- Fishing rod and reel — Vaughn Siller
- Sleeping bag — Lily Warmerdam
- Tent, tripod stool, and call package — Cooper Malik

There were also three 50/50 raffles during the dinner with a $50 cash payout each.

**REMINDER:** The Big Buck Contest is open through muzzleloading season, so if you get a big one, have it scored. Call Levi Connor, Ben Mach, or Tim Warmerdam.

If you get a doe, let Levi know, as we will have a doe drawing for a cash prize. And the coyote bounty is $20 and runs through March 31.

*Pictured: Cooper Malik*

*Pictured: Leeland Beers*

# Beaver Island District Library

## Nibwaakaawin

### LIBRARY TOUR, PART 2: WELCOME TO THE LIBRARY

After stepping through the entryway, you'll find the Seed Library on the left and the bathroom hallway on the right. The Seed Library, created in partnership with the Michigan Seed Library Network, offers donated seeds for patrons to plant and return. We also take part in the annual One Seed, One State program.

Next on the left is the circulation desk, where you can return items, check out new materials, and chat with a librarian. Nearby is our café, offering hot chocolate, tea, or coffee for just $1. The staff area and Director's office are located behind the desk.

Further left is the children's wing, featuring computers, young adult and juvenile collections, and a section for younger readers stocked with books and games. Across from this area is the adult wing, which houses fiction, non-fiction, audiobooks, and a community jigsaw puzzle table.

At the back of the building is the Music Porch, donated by the Langford family. It offers relaxing seating by a fireplace and public computers for adult use.

At the center of the library stand four cedar logs supporting the roof. Around them are DVDs, magazines, and featured new arrivals.

Next month, we will tour the outside area of the library.

### FIND THE BIG DIPPER, SIGN UP AT THE LIBRARY, AND YOU COULD WIN A PRIZE!

Win Astrid the Astrology Bat, a Dark Sky mug, or a Dark Sky ornament.

Come to the library and pick up a copy of The Bear by Andrew Krivak (one entry). Read it and tell us about it (one entry). Get the official map and guide to the Beaver Island State Wildlife Research Area International Dark Sky Sanctuary. Go to any one of the listed Dark Sky Viewing Sites and look up to find the Big Dipper constellation. Congratulations! You know where True North is!

We recommend the Stanhope Family Nature Preserve at Gull Harbor, but you can choose any location you like. (Hint: This is where the Northern Lights appear.)

When you let library staff know you have found "the Bear," you will receive a drawing entry to win prizes—one entry.

This will be an ongoing activity through December 17, 2025, for the first drawing. These and more activities will be offered throughout the period of the NEA Big Read for more drawings.

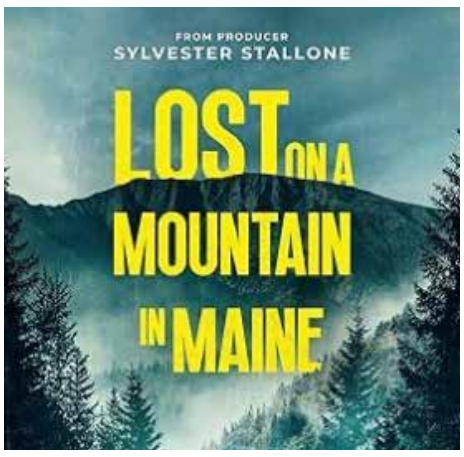
### COME ON, COMMUNITY MEMBERS — SUBMIT YOUR STORIES, POEMS, OR TRUE TIPS FOR LIVING AND SURVIVING ON BEAVER ISLAND. DUE DEC. 15!

### BEAVER TALES 2026

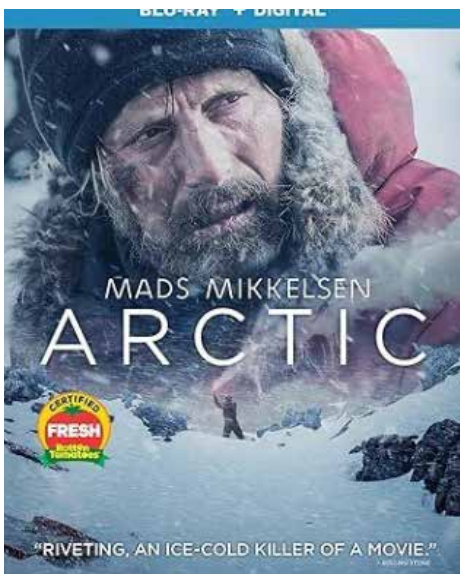
Anyone interested in performing in the upcoming Beaver Tales, please contact Jacque at the Library. We are looking for storytellers and musicians who want to share with the community works related to Beaver Island survival stories. We have some stories and poems from old Beaver Beacons that might be fun, or you may share your own compositions. Songs about survival—perhaps shipwrecks, etc.—are welcome.

### MOVIES AT THE BIC CENTER RELATED TO THE BEAR

December 13:
Kids




Adult




### FUTURE EVENTS

Ms. Tara has been busy adding supplies for our after-school programs. The S.T.E.M. club is on Thursdays, and our snap circuit kits have arrived and will provide endless entertainment and learning for the kids, as well as help improve teamwork and problem-solving skills. Kids are welcome to join any of our after-school programs at any time. Supplies were funded by a grant from Molina Healthcare to purchase program materials.

### TEEN ART NIGHT

Thursday, Dec. 4, from 7–8:30 p.m. Teens will make their own oil pastel painting of the northern lights. Snacks will be provided; feel free to bring something to share if you'd like.

### HOLIDAY CHRISTMAS TREE AT THE GALA

The Library will be decorating a Christmas tree for the Holiday Gala at the Print Shop Museum on Dec. 5. Stop by and see the wonderful trees others have decorated as well!

### OPERATION SANTA PAWS | DECEMBER 1–24

Operation Santa Paws encourages animal lovers to share the gift of giving at shelters everywhere from December 1 to December 24. During this holiday season, let's show a little extra love to our furry friends. The goal of Operation Santa Paws is to stock shelters with much-needed supplies. Our four-legged friends need to feel loved during the holidays just like we do!

### 5 BENEFITS OF LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

- It improves your understanding of your native language.
- Your understanding of other cultures improves.
- Your confidence improves.
- Job opportunities improve.
- It makes travel easier in countries where the new language is spoken.

### THE BIDL MURAL

The BIDL Mural was installed in 2023. It is a magnificent, must-see mural by illustrator Keith Grassmick, son of island residents Brad and Pam. The commissioned oil panel brings to life the Native American and early European history of Beaver Island, witnessed by the oldest birch tree in Michigan. Other historical features include the fishing industry and the natural history of the island. Stop in to visit the BIDL.

### HOLIDAY HOURS

CLOSED:

- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day

Looking for a last minute gift?
Stop by Jan's Book Nook at the Library and choose a gently used book for holiday giving.
The price is always right! Free will donation!

# ICE STORM TIMBER WAS SALVAGED. NOW, MUCH OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN'S 'WOOD BASKET' HAS BEEN EMPTIED

## A TRACTOR-TRAILER FULL OF NEATLY PACKAGED DIMENSIONAL LUMBER STOPS FOR ONE LAST CHECK BEFORE LEAVING BIEWER SAWMILL IN MCBAIN

*By Ellie Katz, originally published October 27 on Interlochen Public Radio*

It's heading to a Menards distribution center in Ohio. Just beyond the tractor-trailer are stacks and stacks of trees. They look like Lincoln Logs with the bark still on. The whole place smells like pine.

"These logs here are all 16-foot red pine and then 12-foot white pine in that section right there," says Wes Windover, pointing to the stacks. He's in charge of finding and buying that timber.

The logs are trucked in from northern Michigan's forests, including the region hit hard by an ice storm earlier this spring. The storm impacted about 3 million acres of trees in 30 counties. Hardwoods like maple and oak were shredded while softwoods like pine snapped in half. Foresters, loggers and sawmills in the region worked around the clock to salvage as much of that timber as possible.

Now, though, there's a new concern: Much of northern Michigan's "wood basket"—worth about $2.2 billion—has been emptied.

The glut of timber after the storm had to be harvested quickly, flooding the market and leading to a good year for Up North foresters this year. But now there's little left to harvest that the storm didn't destroy, and foresters worry what the next several years will look like until newly planted trees can replace what the storm took away.

The sudden shortage could ripple throughout the supply chain in the coming years, crippling an important sector of northern Michigan's economy, foresters say.

"It really sucks to see years of your labors just get wiped out," said Bryce Metcalfe, a forester based out of Grayling. "Like building a house and then watching it blow down."

### 'ALL OF A SUDDEN EVERYTHING'S DEAD'

A wood basket is the geographic radius around a sawmill. Sawmills are strategically located near the species in which they specialize. In the case of a few big mills in northern Michigan, like Biewer Sawmill in McBain, that's pine. But pine species were some of the hardest hit by the ice storm.

"It's like standing in the middle of your farm field and all of a sudden everything's dead around you, and you can't move your farm because you're stuck there," said Justin Knepper, executive director of the Michigan Association of Timbermen. "You went and dropped millions and millions and millions and millions of dollars into your mill in that spot."

The northern Lower Peninsula is a powerhouse for Michigan's timber industry. It accounts for about 40% of the state's entire sawmill output, according to numbers from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

"Most of the red pine plantations, from Gaylord to the Mackinac Bridge and from Petoskey to Alpena have been severely damaged, if not completely destroyed," said Metcalfe, the Grayling forester. "That's just a huge portion of the wood basket that's out there."

About a quarter of Michigan's state-owned forestland was damaged by the storm and had to be salvaged as quickly as possible.

"There's so much that got harvested that should not have gotten harvested for another five, 10, 20 years," said Brenda Haskill, supervisor for the DNR's timber sales and forest utilization unit. "For those of us that understand and monitor the markets and the forest industry, the coming five to 10 years could be very difficult with certain wood species in certain areas."

### 'YOU LOSE CUSTOMERS THAT WAY'

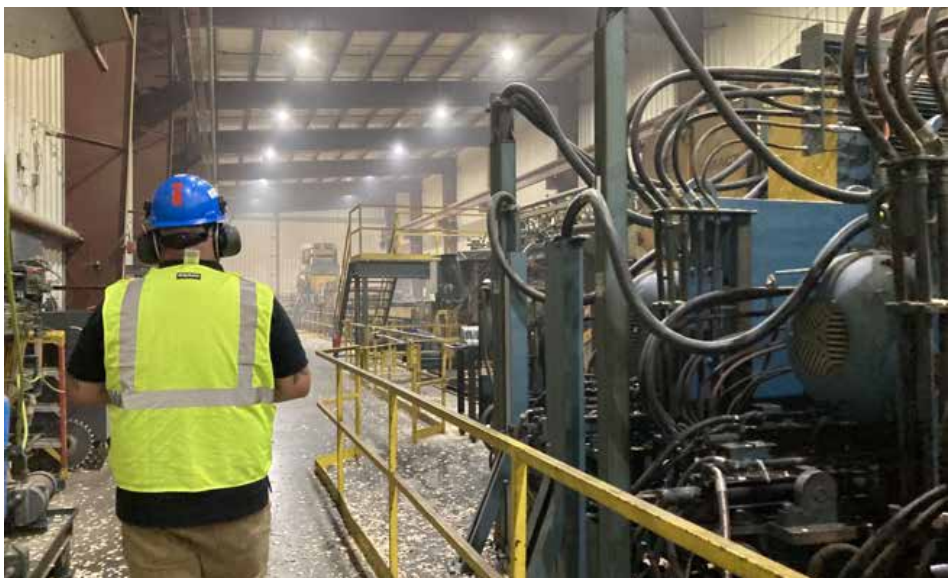
Windover estimates about a quarter of Biewer Sawmill's timber comes to McBain from the ice storm zone.

Another major pine mill, PotlatchDeltic near Marquette, also sources a significant amount of timber from the area.

"We're looking at probably 10(%) to 15% less red pine on the market next year because of this, which doesn't seem like a lot, but it is in the big scheme of things," Windover said.
It's unlikely the cost of two-by-fours will go up much at Menards — those companies can just ship in lumber from the rest of the country. But Metcalfe, the Grayling forester, said price increases are a possibility down the road.

"Because instead of shipping in those two-by-fours from Michigan to a Michigan location, they're hauling them in from an out-of-state location," he said.

But the regional timber industry will be hit hardest. People like Windover will have to send their logging crews farther, paying more for fuel and hauling costs. Plus, more buyers will be competing for less available timber.



*Biewer Sawmill plant manager Kris Demel walks through the sawmill outside Cadillac, where pine trees are made into dimensional lumber that's shipped to stores like Home Depot, Lowe's and Menards. The mill recently invested millions of dollars in upgrades. (Photo: Ellie Katz/IPR News)*

It might also mean a dip in the amount of products coming out of northern lower Michigan and a rise in those same products coming from other parts of the region or country.

"We're hoping that doesn't happen," Windover said. "You lose customers that way if you can't produce enough for them."

But exactly how much production will go down is still unknown. The state won't have exact estimates until next year, when the remaining patches of damaged forest are cleaned.

"What I don't want is people to think, 'Oh, all the sawmills in northern Michigan are going to shut down.' No, they're not," said Haskill, with the DNR. "It is going to change the way in which business is done, to the extent of availability, distance to markets, distance to harvest. It could be a little bit rough for a couple years."

Knepper, with the Michigan Association of Timbermen, is less optimistic.

"Many of our mills might ride it out. Our loggers might be able to ride it out," he said. "But the industry will (probably) have to go through some downsizing and/or correction in part due to the ice storm."

Metcalfe, the forester in Grayling, put the changes coming to mills in the region more simply: "Make less, make something different (or) move."

The state recently set aside $14 million to replant red pine after the ice storm. That money will go toward prepping sites, buying seed and paying nurseries to grow extra stock for the DNR. But it's likely to take at least three to five years for all the damaged acreage to be replanted—and decades longer for those trees to be useful to the industry.

"It's kind of a long-term problem that, unfortunately, needs to be addressed quickly," said Travis Heikkinen, a procurement manager at PotlatchDeltic—the pine mill near Marquette that produces stud lumber like two-by-fours. "We'll really see the effects of it further down the pipeline."

But maybe the biggest question mark is what happens in the decades between now and when that timber is harvestable again.

"While we're fortunate enough to have a very large procurement area, it seems like we are seeing more and more of these events," said Heikkinen. "The blowdown in Wisconsin and the ice storm now in Michigan—just seems like they're happening more and more now."

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# ON THE FRONT PORCH WITH HEATHER CARY

*By Michelle LaFreniere*

Heather Lynn Cary is the oldest of four girls. She was born to Lynn McDonough and Greg Cary. Island doctors had stopped delivering babies, so she was born in Petoskey, MI. But don't worry, she came home within a few days of her birth. She has ventured to other places in her life, but she has found that this is truly home.

I met with Heather at her home and was floored by the beautiful space she and Brandon have created for their family. She showed me their new addition. Jaw-dropping, stunning, soothing, bright, and welcoming are all words I would use to describe it. She showed me details that made me know beyond the shadow of a doubt that she is an old soul. At the foot of her bed stands an old, worn bench. It looks well-used but well-loved. It is a bench from her grandmother's house. It was sat on by her mother and her six brothers when they sat down for meals growing up. In her new living room are two cabinets: one metal-topped cabinet from the old Rustic Villa Cabins that she bought and refinished; the other is truly a family heirloom from Brandon's side of the family. It is another metal-topped cabinet that came from Ireland with the O'Donnell family. Brandon's grandmother was an O'Donnell (Rita O'Donnell Gillespie).

Speaking of her mother, it is no wonder Heather is strong, beautiful, versatile, and tough as nails. Her mom, Lynn, was the sixth of seven children born to Bud and Skip McDonough and the only girl. She had no choice, growing up with all those brothers. Her grandmother, Skip, too, was a very strong woman—a nurse and a widow at a very young age with children still at home. Skip stepped into her husband's shoes and continued to run the family business until her passing (McDonough's Market). Along the way, she raised some incredible human beings. There is not a single doubt in my mind that she is absolutely beaming from Heaven with pride in her children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren. Heather herself has been strong from the start. When she was just 15 years old, she saved her sisters from a house fire. She helped them all out of an upstairs window before she got herself out. The youngest, Olivia, was only three years old. She is still that protective big sister. As a testament to their upbringing, all four sisters now own their own businesses.

Heather graduated from Beaver Island Community School in 2002 in a class of seven. That January, she left to attend Chic University in Grand Rapids. She loved it; she had an amazing apartment all to herself. She cocktail waitressed in the same neighborhood as her apartment complex, so she didn't have to go far. She made friends with her classmates for one reason, because she was the only one in her class who could change a tire, kill a bee or spider, and knew how to pull a car out of the ditch. Hers was the only four-wheel drive in the parking lot at school (I smiled hard at that one).

She knew she couldn't stay in Grand Rapids; it was too far from the water. She couldn't see it, hear it, or smell it. All she could see and smell was asphalt. When she returned home, she decided she needed the experience of working in a salon. She packed up and moved to Traverse City to work in Signature Salon on Front Street. She loved that experience too, but home called her again. She kicked her dad out of his office, and he made it a salon for her. Several times in our conversation, she mentioned the unwavering support of both of her parents. Every child needs that.

She relocated and experienced a few bumps in the road, but being true to herself, she never gave up. Her salon, Concrete Blonde, is now housed in the old Malloy Meat Market on Main Street on Beaver Island. She has made every square inch of it beautiful while still maintaining the original integrity of the structure. She and Hilary Palmer staff it themselves, offering a full range of hair needs—cuts, colors, and everything in between. Heather also offers gel polish nails.

She has no plans for expansion of hours or services for now. She wants to be the one to raise her girls. Kori, age ten, and Graci, age four, are the real focus in life for both her and Brandon. She says she wants to do that until they get too old and don't think she is cool anymore. She is content and happy with her current work/home life balance. In her rare downtime, she loves to garden and has learned the value of perennials. She loves to cook and is quite good at it, as I can attest to that. Her other love is design, particularly interior design. She hopes someday, when she can't stand behind her chair, she can actually sit down at a desk and consult people on design and maybe make some money doing it.

Heather and Brandon have been together for more than half of their lives and have grown up with each other. They uplift and support each other. They built their addition together, paying for it as they went along, and both lived to see it to completion and tell the story.

Some of Heather's favorite memories growing up here include playing until it was dark out and her mom whistling in the neighborhood to get them home for dinner. Winter memories include towing and sledding. She said her mom used to take them most weekends. On weekends that they didn't do that, they snowmobiled or walked to Font Lake to go ice skating for the day.

In a testament to her high school volleyball years, she told me she learned so much more than the sport itself. She learned teamwork, perseverance, pushing yourself, setting goals, and working to achieve them. She is thrilled that Kori already loves the sport, and she hopes to at least be an assistant coach in the coming years so she can travel with the team and watch her grow. Her fondest memories include her dad (who coached the boys' basketball team) being able to travel to almost all of her games. At that time, those sports were played in the same season.

She is a beautiful soul. She lives her life intentionally. She is strong. She is unapologetically Heather Lynn Cary, and I am so glad to know her, to love her, and can't wait to see her girls grow up. Thanks for having me over, Heather. You truly have created a beautiful life for you and your family.

# TUNES MUSIC MAKERS HIT A HIGH NOTE WITH NEW STUDIO

*By Elsie Burton*

Beaver Island has always been home to rich, beautiful music. The island, known for its longstanding Irish roots, has compelled many with its small-town feel and local musicians. One of the many outstanding local musicians who made a name for himself, Edward Palmer, left behind a powerful musical legacy.

*Pictured: Hilary Palmer (left) and Tara Palmer-Pop (right) during their grand reveal.*

Hilary, Tara, Rita, and Corey Palmer, the children of Edward and Mary Palmer, came together to carry on his legacy after his passing. In 2024, the four siblings founded the TUNES Music Makers program, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, on Beaver Island. In partnership with the Beaver Island Community School and Beaver Island Community Center, the program has delivered over 1,400 free music lessons to Beaver Island students.

As the program continued to grow, TUNES sought out a new space of their own. On November 2, Hilary Palmer and Tara Palmer-Pop took to the TUNES Facebook page to announce the new studio. Thanks to a $10,000 Geographic Enrichment Grant from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation and support from anonymous donors, the studio is set to open in its new downtown location in January 2026. Recently, the program was also granted $2,500 in additional funding from the Great Lakes Energy People Fund to support the cost of new computers, printers, and other technological upgrades in the studio. Big things are happening for the program, and the community is overjoyed!

*Pictured: A young Edward Palmer playing the guitar.*

Check out some of the beautiful messages from the community that were left for co-founders Tara, Hilary, Rita, and Corey, the TUNES program and Edward Palmer's musical legacy:

"I'm thrilled to hear this news! As a new Beaver Island summer resident and professional musician, I applaud your efforts in providing these wonderful opportunities to your residents! Congratulations!"

— Priscilla Johnson

*Pictured: The new studio on Main Street, Beaver Island.*

"The boys cannot WAIT for this space and all the memories to come. We all feel the difference you are making. Congratulations, TUNES."

— Sarah Anne Siller

"Your dad would be beyond proud!"

— Kimberly Wright

"Congratulations to you all! That is beautiful, and how wonderful to keep your father's spirit alive through others."

— Jaime Dixon

The future of TUNES Music Makers is brighter and more powerful than ever. Be sure to wish the TUNES team and students a huge congratulations on this achievement, and don't forget to check out their new studio at 26255 Main Street.

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For more information on the TUNES Music Makers program, please contact tunes@tunesmusicmakers.org. Or, visit their website at www.tunesmusicmakers.org!

To support student scholarships and help keep lessons completely free for Beaver Island's young musicians, donations can be made at: www.givebutter.com/TUNESforTomorrow

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# MUNICIPAL MARINAS CELEBRATE A SUCCESSFUL AND EXPANSIVE SEASON

*Submitted by Harbormaster Vicky Fingeroot*

The Beaver Island Municipal Marinas wrapped up a productive and well-received 2025 season, welcoming 365 transient sailboats and 668 transient powerboats to our shores. Despite weather-related dips in traffic, the season was marked by steady activity and overwhelmingly positive feedback from both visitors and island residents.

One of the biggest improvements this year was the expansion of Marina hours to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. Locals frequently expressed appreciation for being able to fuel up their boats after work, while transient boaters valued being greeted by staff upon arrival instead of tying up unattended. The extension of both Marina seasons—keeping the South Dock open through September and the North Dock into mid-October—also gave Fall boaters new opportunities to enjoy the island.

Our new merchandise program was a highlight of the year. Shirts, hats, and stickers sold out completely, with purchases made by both visiting boaters and islanders. We plan to increase local engagement in 2026 and expand the line to include sweatshirts and insulated cups.

Infrastructure upgrades also continued throughout the season. Both Marinas received new security cameras, and major improvements to our internet service began with the installation of satellite equipment and preparation for new fiber connectivity. These upgrades will support safer, faster, and more reliable service next year.

Looking ahead, plans for 2026 include installing weather stations, welcoming boat clubs during quieter periods, applying for a grant to purchase recyclable trash containers, and building a lean-to to house them. The Marinas remain committed to providing a welcoming, safe, and community-minded experience for all who visit Beaver Island by water.

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# THE BEAVER ISLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL: THE MORE YOU KNOW

*By Leila Freijy, Patrons of the Arts in Rural Communities Chair*

**THE SEED IS PLANTED (2003)**

The story of the Beaver Island Music Festival (BIMF) begins not with a business plan, but with a spontaneous act of joy. In the summer of 2003, a small group of friends orchestrated an impromptu concert deep in the island's woods to host musician Stephen Garcia and his band, Simplicity. With a stage cobbled together on a flatbed trailer, power sourced from a generator, and a bonfire casting light on the gathering, music flowed through the pine-scented air. This "casual plot" drew an unexpected crowd of 40 visitors who camped for the weekend and 75 islanders who found their way to the clearing. The resounding success of that magical, off-grid night revealed a profound community desire for a shared musical experience in nature, planting the seed for what would become an annual tradition.

**THE FOUNDERS' VISION TAKES ROOT (2004-2012)**

Guided by a deep love for Beaver Island, a core group of visionaries formalized the event. Each founder brought unique strengths: Dan Burton, who had a lifelong connection to the island and construction skills, built the physical infrastructure, which was powered exclusively by solar power for the first 21 years.

Carol Burton's organizational leadership and community-mindedness transformed the gathering into an inclusive, island-wide event.

Bayard Kurth's native island perspective and artistic flair helped shape the festival's authentic character.

Stephen Garcia's musical talents and connections curated the soundtrack of the festival's early years.

Their collective mission was to create a festival that was more than just music; it became a celebration of community, art, and the pristine natural environment of Beaver Island. This vision was codified into a formal mission statement emphasizing education, family involvement, and the promotion of renewable energies alongside diverse musical traditions.

**BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: THE NON-PROFIT EVOLUTION (2013)**

By its 10th anniversary, the BIMF had grown beyond its grassroots origins, now attracting thousands of attendees. The operational and financial complexities of hosting that many attendees necessitated a new structure to ensure its longevity and accessibility. In a pivotal move, the founders and a dedicated group of island residents established a formal board of directors and pursued non-profit status. In April 2013, Beaver Island Music Festival, Inc. was officially recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization. This transition was seamless, thanks to years of meticulous record-keeping and a clearly defined mission, marking a new chapter of community stewardship and sustainable growth. Shortly thereafter, the Patrons of the Arts in Rural Communities (PARC) was established to umbrella, support, and unite the BIMF with other events that would strengthen the Beaver Island community and its residents.

**CRAFTING AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE**

The music festival's magic lies in its ability to forge deep emotional connections. This is achieved through a meticulously curated experience comprising:

- A Musical Tapestry: Over the last 23 years, approximately 1,800 artists have performed across 320+ acts. The festival has become a pilgrimage for music lovers. The lineup is deliberately eclectic, spanning Americana, Blues, Celtic, Folk, Rock, and countless fusion genres, ensuring discovery and delight.
- Intimacy and Access: The remote woodland venue eliminates the barrier between artist and audience. Attendees share meals, campfires, and even ferry rides with performers, earning the BIMF its reputation as a festival where everyone is treated like family.
- Inclusive Participation: The experience extends beyond passive listening. Open Mic sessions empower attendees to become performers, Kids Time creates core memories for families, and performances on the Beaver Island ferries turn the journey into a welcoming prelude.
- A Community in Miniature: The festival fosters a temporary village built on shared values. A designated Quiet Camp for families, partnerships with local EMS and security for safety, and a team of volunteers dedicated to sustainability and comfort create a safe, welcoming environment for all.

**THE RIPPLE EFFECT: ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

The BIMF is a powerful engine for the Beaver Island community, creating impact that extends far beyond the festival grounds: Economic Catalyst: The festival generates the island's largest visitor week, providing a critical revenue boost for hotels, rentals, restaurants, airlines, the ferry service, and shops. Strategic coordination with the Beaver Island Historical Society's Museum Week packages culture and history, encouraging longer stays and benefiting multiple organizations.

Philanthropic Heart: As a non-profit, the BIMF reinvests directly into the community. It has provided support and donations to many island organizations such as the Community School, Community Center, Historical Society, Cultural Arts Association, Is Everybody Happy Party (held every May to commemorate beloved Island musician, Ed Palmer, and serving as a fundraiser for the Island's TUNES Music Maker program), Homecoming, Emerald Isle Irish Festival, and other vital institutions, giving added support and enriching island life.

The Ultimate Marketing Tool: The BIMF is Beaver Island's most effective ambassador. First-time visitors experience the island's beauty and community spirit firsthand. This powerful introduction leads to repeat tourism, and for many, it has even resulted in the purchase of island property, demonstrating a profound long-term economic and social impact.

**POWERED BY PASSION: THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MUSIC**

The festival's continued success is a testament to its people. It is primarily funded through affordable ticket sales, local business sponsorships, and donations. Its operations are powered by a dedicated army of volunteers who handle everything from setup and hosting musicians to recycling and security. This collective effort, guided by a strong and strategic board of directors (bimf.net/team), ensures the festival remains true to its mission while innovating for the future.

**THE ROAD AHEAD - MORE THAN MUSIC**

Over the past 23 years, the Beaver Island Music Festival has evolved from a solitary bonfire into a beloved institution. It is a living testament to the power of community, the universal language of music, and the majestic beauty of a unique place. The BIMF is not merely an event; it is an annual homecoming, an economic catalyst, a philanthropic force, and the beating heart of summer on Beaver Island, creating echoes of joy that last long after the final note has faded.

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# EMERALD ISLES' HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

**Looking for ways to spread some holiday cheer? Check out these local spots for different ways to spend the holidays**

## Beaver Island Community School

- **22 December - January 2**
  - Christmas Break

## Beaver Island Community Center

- **06 December**
  - **4 - 5:30pm:** Here Comes Santa Claus
  - **5:30-6pm:** Tree Lighting Ceremony & Carols
  - **6pm:** Home for the Holidays Concert with Stay Happy Band
- **17 December**
  - **6pm:** NoMI Strings Collective Candlelight Concert
- **18 December**
  - **7 - 8pm:** TUNES Holiday Recital

## Beaver Island Christian Church

- **07 December**
  - **3pm:** Christmas Cantata
- **13 December**
  - Cookie Carnival
- **24 December**
  - **5pm:** Christmas Eve Service

## Beaver Island Historical Society

- **05 December**
  - **6pm:** Holiday Social
  - **Food Drive:** Bring a food item to donate to the food pantry

## Island Airways

- **Toys for Tots:** Drop off a toy to donate to families & kids in need

# The Kids' Corner

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## Can you help Rudolph find his way back to Santa?

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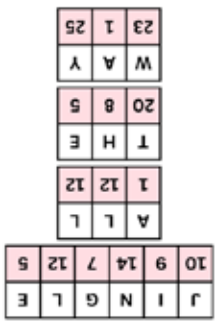

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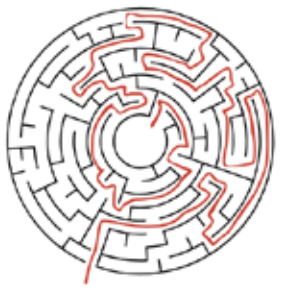


# LATEST NEWS FROM THE ELKS

*By Lori Taylor-Blitz*

The Beaver Island Elks Lodge #2886 is proud to announce it has been awarded grants from the Elks National Foundation, continuing the Lodge's commitment to serving the Beaver Island community through health, wellness, and support programs.

The first award, a Supersized Beacon Grant, will fund the annual Dental Clinic for all island children, offering free cleanings, sealants, X-rays, and exams provided by Dental Clinics North. This valuable service ensures that every island child has access to high-quality preventive dental care, regardless of family income or insurance status.

*Pictured is Elks Exalted Ruler, Lori Taylor-Blitz presenting a check to the Beaver Island Food Pantry leadership Beth Croswhite, Judi Meister, Ann Partridge, Chris Heikka, and Cynthia Pryor.*

In an exciting new addition this year, the clinic will also invite island elders over the age of 80 to participate and receive the same free dental services. The program is supported in part by the Beaver Island Rural Health Center, reinforcing the shared mission of promoting community health and wellness.

The Dental Clinic is scheduled for February 2026, with exact dates to be determined. Parents will receive registration information through school correspondence, while seniors can look for registration details in the January issue of the Northern Islander.

The Beacon Grant also addressed food insecurity on Beaver Island by providing $4,167 to the Beaver Island Food Pantry, helping to ensure that local families and individuals have consistent access to nutritious food throughout the year.

Looking ahead, the Lodge is also preparing for the annual Elks Hoop Shoot on December 4, 2025. The Hoop Shoot is a free-throw shooting contest open to youth ages 8–13, offering an opportunity to develop skills, confidence, and sportsmanship. Winners progress through local, district, state, and national competitions, where thousands of young athletes across the country represent their communities and learn the value of hard work and perseverance.

**MORE FROM THE ELKS**

The Beaver Island Elks Lodge #2886 welcomes community members who are interested in giving back, fostering fellowship, and making a difference in the lives of others. If you would like to learn more about becoming an Elk or getting involved in local service projects, please contact the Lodge or speak with any current member for more information.

Through these grants and programs, the Beaver Island Elks Lodge #2886 continues to embody the Elks' guiding principle "Elks Care, Elks Share" by investing in the health, well-being, and spirit of the Beaver Island community.

# KEEPING THE PROMISE: ELKS SUPPORTS OUR ISLAND VETERANS

*By Cynthia Pryor, Elks Veterans Committee Chair*

"So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective order of ELKS will never forget them." For more than 157 years, the ELKS have upheld this simple yet powerful promise.

The ELKS National Veterans Service Commission provides support to 1,857 ELKS Lodges across the country and Beaver Island Elks #2286 is one of them. The ELKS Veterans Committee at #2886 recognizes our Veterans and the service they have given, and continue to give, to the United States of America. We work toward the following:

- Seek ELKS grants to support our Island Veterans. We recently received a $1000 grant and are looking to match that grant in obtaining twenty (20) round trip air fare tickets from Island Air and Fresh Air Aviation for the use of our Island Veterans. Both Airlines have agreed to give our Lodge a reduced rate for these tickets so that we can meet this goal. Many, many thanks to Angel Welke and Rachel Teague.
- Work with the Beaver Island Historical Society to obtain grant funding for Veterans Banners that would hang on our street lamps - celebrating our Island Veterans – both past and current.
- Work within ELKS Lodge #2886 with members to establish a "buddy" system with Island Veterans that could need extra help or assistance.
- Honor our Island Veterans on special days of remembrance like Memorial Day and Veterans Day with luncheons or other special events.
- Seek new ways to support our Veterans with fund-raising events.

Lodge #2886 has established a Veterans Fund to be used for aiding, recognizing and honoring our Island Veterans, YOU CAN HELP!

1. Donate any amount to the Veterans Fund to support the ELKS Island Veteran's program
2. Donate your time to visit an Island Veteran with "wellness" checks or outings that will "make their day".
3. Purchase a Veteran Banner of an Island Veteran who has served their country. $100.

If you wish to contribute to the Beaver Island #2886 Veterans Fund - please send your donation to the Lodge and a note describing what you want your donation to go for.

ELKS #2886 Veterans Fund
P.O. Box 141
Beaver Island, Michigan 49782

If you wish to donate your time or have good ideas for a fund-raising event, please contact Cynthia Pryor, Veterans Committee Chair at 906 369-2414 or cpryor444 @gmail.com or talk to Alvin LaFreniere, Beaver Island AMVETS.

Thank you, Beaver Island Veterans, for your service to our country and Beaver Island.

We will never forget.

# RURAL HEALTH CENTER ANNOUNCES TWO NEW GRANTS

*By Frank D'Andraia*

The Elks National Foundation has awarded the Beaver Island Rural Health Center (BIRHC) a $5,500 grant for the center's upcoming 2026 dental clinic.

Unlike past BIRHC dental clinics, which focused exclusively on school-age youth, the 2026 clinic has been expanded to include all year-round island residents aged 80 years or older.

This is the fifth consecutive year the Elks have partnered with the island's rural health center to provide both school-age youth and now elders with a free dental checkup, which includes a dental exam, x-rays, cleaning, and related preventive care.

In addition to the Elks award of $5,500, the health center is committed to supplementing the award should demand exceed expectations. There are approximately 52 students enrolled in the community school and about 35–40 octogenarians living year-round on Beaver Island.

The latest online demographic data estimates the island's year-round population now totals approximately 752, representing a 14.5% increase since 2010.

Frank D'Andraia, the President of the BIRHC Board, said, "The members of Local Elks Lodge #2886 and its Exalted Ruler, Lori Taylor-Blitz, as well as the BIRHC board and donors, have all been steadfast proponents of this meaningful collaboration." He added, "This purposeful partnership has made a difference in the quality of life on Beaver Island."

Additionally, D'Andraia announced the health center is a recipient of a Charlevoix County Community Foundation (C3F) Geographic Enrichment Fund grant that allows the health center to stretch its donor dollars and replace a vital piece of operating equipment.

The center is replacing a more than 20-year-old air-handling unit and undertaking related maintenance work. Labor and equipment costs are expected to run about $8,100.

C3F is providing a Geographic Enrichment Fund Award that will cover 30% of the costs, or $2,430. According to the BIRHC board president, a second grant of equal value is being sought from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians' 2025 2% Fund.

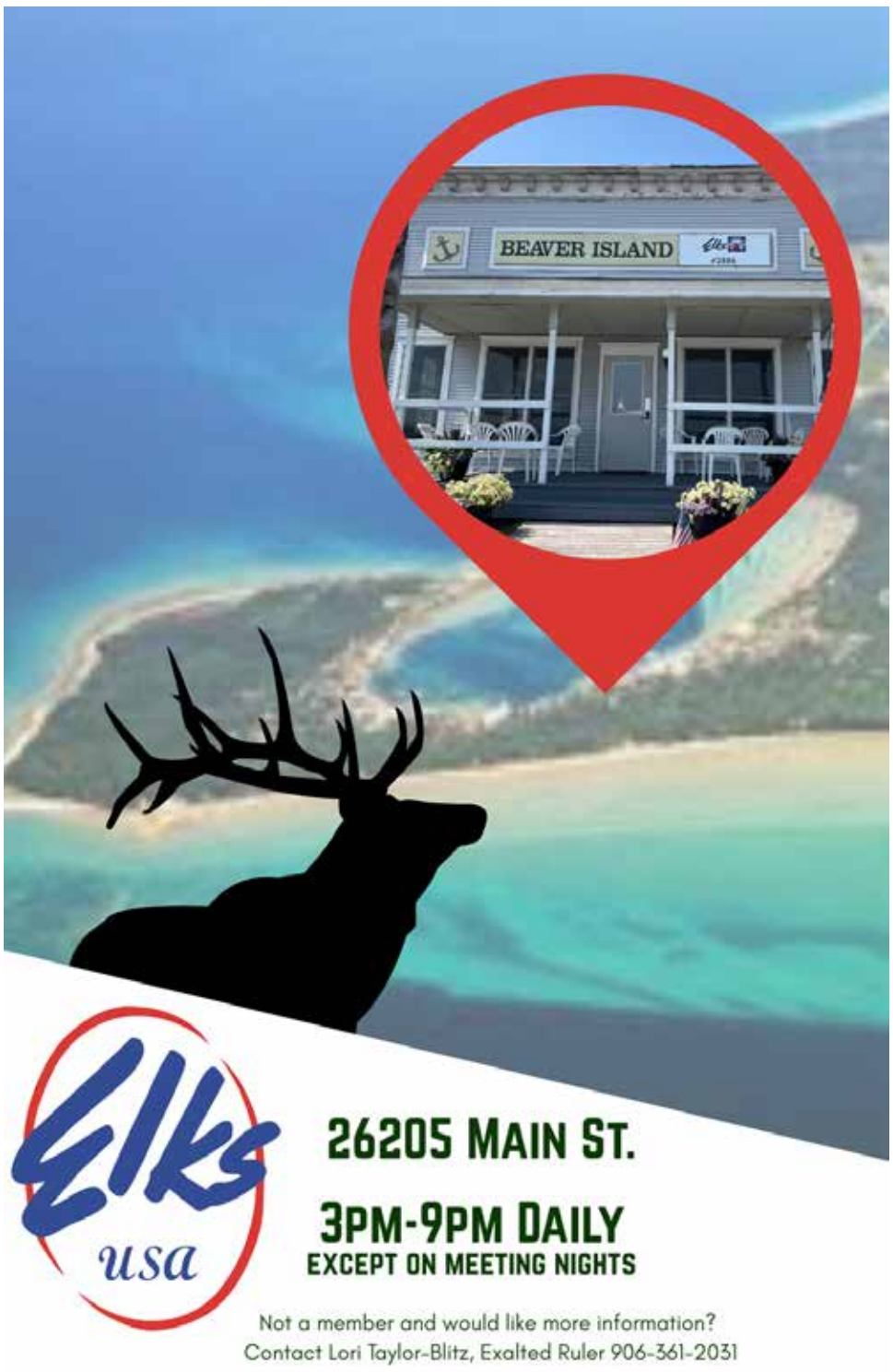
The remaining 40% of the replacement and cleaning costs, or $3,240, is being covered by the BIRHC's Special Projects (Donor) Fund.

The Charlevoix County Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Charlevoix County, Michigan. Established in 1992, it focuses on building charitable resources and making grants to support various community needs.

The Beaver Island Rural Health Center, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, is the primary care facility on Beaver Island. The BIRHC serves the local community by providing a range of health services aimed at ensuring access to quality healthcare for residents and visitors.

# THANK YOU, VETERANS!

*Pictured are Army Veterans Gary Conant , Pete LoDico, Alvin LaFreniere, and Greg Doig enjoying a Veterans Day lunch at the Elks Lodge.*



# NOLLAIG SHONA AGUS ATHBHLIAIN FAOI MHAISE DHUIT: MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE BEAVER ISLAND IRISH HERITAGE GROUP

*By Kathleen "Kitty" McNamara*

As 2025 comes to an end, the Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group (BIIHG) extends its deepest thanks to all who have supported its mission to preserve and celebrate Irish culture on Beaver Island. 2025 has been a year of growth, accomplishment, and exciting milestones, and we are thrilled to share our successes with you as we look ahead to an even brighter future in 2026 and beyond. So many exciting things happened in 2025 thanks to the enthusiasm of our volunteer board and the ongoing amazing support from our community.

Whether you purchased a ticket, sponsored the Féile itself, volunteered your time, or made a donation, you've helped us keep Beaver Island's Irish heritage thriving for future generations. As we look ahead to another year of preserving, sharing, and celebrating our roots, we simply want to say Go raibh maith agat (thank you) for believing in and supporting our mission. We can't wait to see you on America's Emerald Isle in 2026 enjoying the sound of the Arranmore Pipe Band as it makes its return trip to the Féile!

**KEY 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- **Impacted Local and Regional Economy:** The 2025 Féile generated estimated economic impact in the range of $275,000.00. The positive economic impact extended beyond Beaver Island. Festival attendees who traveled to get to the island had to travel through Charlevoix, generating an estimated $20,000 in mainland spending on local food, fuel, parking, shopping, and lodging.
- **Inducted New Hall of Fame Members:** The Beaver Island Irish American Hall of Fame welcomed four new inductees, honoring those whose contributions have shaped our island's Irish American identity.
- **Designed and Built Two Currachs:** Two currachs (Irish Rowing Boats) were built by club members on Beaver Island exclusively of island oak and poplar! These 25' X 4' boats were built under the direction of Dan Burton and will grace the harbor fostering recreational and competitive rowing for years to come.
- **Curated Events for St. Brigid's Day and St. Patrick's Day:** We offered music and workshops celebrating St Brigid's Day. And we held our first annual St Patrick's Day concert to compliment the long-established weekend of activities.
- **Debuted a Podcast:** The Tides That Tie: The Tides That Tie allows everyone to discover the stories, traditions, and shared heritage that connect Beaver Island and Arranmore. The Tides That Tie is hosted by Kevin Green and Ron Gregg, and produced by the Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group. You can listen on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or anywhere you get your podcasts.
- **Introduced Arranmore Adventures Raffle:** We introduced a unique raffle featuring a grand prize trip to Arranmore Island, Ireland. With only 200 tickets available, the contest very quickly sold out during the Féile, but the cohort had to wait on pins and needles until the winning name (Layla 'rhymes with Féile' Hall) was drawn during the Samhain celebration at Whiskey Point Brewery on Nov 1.
- **Received Grants:** BIIHG wrote for and received grants from Government of Ireland Emmigrant Support Grant to assist in the cost of venues and marketing for the festival and Charlevoix County Community Foundation for funds to support bringing 20 members of the Arranmore Pipe Band to the 2026 Féile.

**2026 FUNDRAISING TIMELINE AND SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:**

Looking ahead to 2026, we are planning an ambitious year and will be reaching out to seek your continued support.
Your generosity makes everything we do possible, and we want to make sure you know what to expect in the coming months:

- **January:** We begin reaching out to off-island Féile sponsors, whose support is vital to our growth and vision. Your sponsorships will help us dream big and achieve even more for Féile 2026, including welcoming the Arranmore Pipe Band!
- **February 1 – March 13:** Our annual Calling of the Clans campaign will run, culminating in the announcement of the winning clan on St. Patrick's Day Weekend. This effort is central to preserving the long-term sustainability of our organization.
- **March 13:** Tickets for the 2026 Féile will go on sale, marking the official countdown to our signature event.
- **April:** We begin reaching out to local Beaver Island businesses whose Féile sponsorships allow us to bring in world class talent to educate, entertain and enhance our community. Their commitment supports our vital cultural and historical work.

Please know that our website is always available for your donations, you do not need to wait for a specific time to contribute; make your contribution when the time is right for you. Just go to the Get Involved Tab on our website (*https://www.irishfeile.com/)*.

We are excited for what's to come and grateful for your ongoing support as we expand our efforts to preserve and share our Irish heritage with the world. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to get involved as we continue to grow. Thank you for being part of the Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group family.

*Pictured is Layla Hall accepting the Arranmore Adventure Raffle prize from BIIHG board of directors' member Catherine Meintsma.*

# GRANT AWARDS

The Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group is grateful for grants received from the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme and the Charlevoix County Community Foundation.
These funds will allow us to continue our mission, including presenting authentic and varied educational activities to recognize, showcase, and preserve Beaver Island's unique Irish Heritage including its connection to Arranmore Island, County Donegal, Ireland

Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme

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# PEAINE TOWNSHIP: A YEAR OF PROGRESS

*By Maria Dal Pra, Peaine Township Supervisor*

Peaine Township has closed out another year defined by momentum, teamwork, and a shared dedication to protecting the island we all call home. From major park upgrades to smart environmental policies and extraordinary campground success, 2025 has proven that when our community moves together, we make remarkable things happen.

**TRANSFORMING OUR PARKS & PUBLIC SPACES**

This year brought some of the most exciting improvements our Township has seen in years: projects designed not just for today, but for generations to come.

- At Lake Geneserath, a new solar-powered water well now provides clean, year-round water access thanks in part to a $19,700 Michigan Department of Agriculture grant.
- Additionally, in collaboration with the Wildlife Club, a CCCF Grant, BIBCO, and private donors, Peaine Township becomes one of limited parks in the State of Michigan that offers an ADA compliant fishing pier for those with disabilities.

- At Font Lake Park, accessibility took center stage with the installation of a new ADA-compliant vault toilet and an ADA-accessible water bottle filler and drinking fountain, supported by a $10,000 contribution from the Charlevoix County Parks and Recreation Millage Fund. Electrical service has been trenched and is scheduled for connection in 2026, providing full power to the Font Lake Park pavilion.
- The pickleball courts received surface coating and painted lines to extend the life of this recreational asset and improve player safety.
- Inside the Peaine Township Hall, all meeting room windows were replaced with new energy-efficient models, improving comfort and reducing long-term costs. We will now look toward having bathroom amenities modernized. These changes collectively reflect Peaine's commitment to responsible improvements, accessibility, and sustainability.

**A STRONG STAND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

Environmental protection continues to be a defining pillar of our Township's mission. Early this year, Peaine passed a comprehensive Invasive Species Ordinance designed to safeguard interior lakes and natural environments. To implement this work, the Township hired Invasive Species Administrator Cheryl Kern and welcomed two Central Michigan University interns, forming a highly effective on-island team.

The Board also adopted a Dangerous Buildings Ordinance, strengthening public safety and helping ensure that deteriorating structures are addressed before they endanger residents or the environment. Simultaneously, historical buildings are protected in the ordinance.

**THE HISTORIC ICE STORM: A STARK REMINDER OF OUR ISLAND'S DIVERSE NEEDS**

One of the most defining challenges of the year was the historic ice storm that struck Peaine Township with unprecedented force in relation to island resources, particularly the south end of Beaver Island, where the impacts were most severe. While Beaver Island is one community, the storm made clear that we are also a large island with diverse geography; major weather events do not affect all areas equally and require two different schools of thought. Many Peaine Township residents were left without power, in some cases without water, for up to 12 days, creating hardships that tested the resilience of homes, families, and essential services. The south end and local roads on the west side with heavier tree cover, greater distances between homes, and more limited utility redundancy meant the recovery effort required more time and more intensive support.

**LONG-TERM IMPACTS FROM THE STORM WILL CONTINUE INTO 2026:**

- Widespread tree stress is causing ongoing limb drop and debris hazards.
- Increased forest fuel load requires enhanced fire-prevention planning.
- Road shoulders and access points were damaged by fallen timber and debris removal continues to redirect resources and cause concerns.
- Debris management remains a major, multi-season undertaking.

Peaine Township moved swiftly after the storm, prioritizing high-risk zones, coordinating infrastructure reboot, cleanup, and working with State and County resources to mitigate the impact. This event underscored the importance of planning for the distinct needs of different areas of the island, ensuring that future emergency response strategies reflect the realities of living on a geographically expansive, ecologically diverse island where resources are constrained.

Cleanup, hazard-tree removal, and safety assessments continue weekly via reports and on-site visual asssessments as the Township works to protect residents, visitors, and infrastructure from lingering risks.

# THE LAST BOAT LEAVES THE HARBOR BEFORE WINTER

Lasting the longest into early wintry weather before coming out of the water, Mike Weede's "The Resolute" called it a season on November 8. It was close at the end, Mike McDonough's Chelsea Lee went dry just one day before.

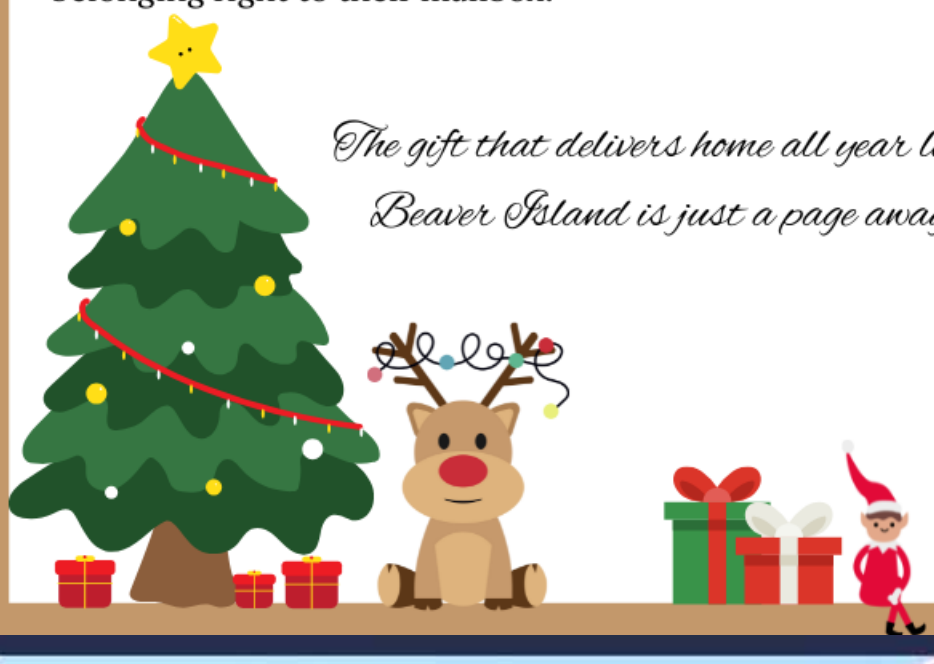
# *It's giving season…*

This holiday season, share the gift that keeps Beaver Island friends, family, and loved ones connected all year long—the Northern Islander.

For Islanders near and far, the Northern Islander is more than just a newspaper—it's a lifeline to home. From community events and local news to stories that celebrate our people, traditions, and natural beauty, each issue captures the spirit of Beaver Island.

Whether you're looking for the perfect gift for a friend, a neighbor, or a loved one who misses the island, a subscription to the Northern Islander delivers warmth, connection, and belonging right to their mailbox.

*The gift that delivers home all year long;*
*Beaver Island is just a page away.*



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### *Bonus!*

As a thank you for giving the gift of Northern Islander News this holiday season, every gifted subscription includes an optional 'happy holidays' feature on the Northern Islander website!

NORTHERN ISLANDER

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# BEAVER ISLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL TAKES MAJOR STEPS TOWARD A GREENER FUTURE

*By Carol Burton*

As we gear up for this year's Beaver Island Music Festival (BIMF), excitement fills the air—not just for the music, but for the meaningful changes we're making to celebrate our community and protect our beautiful home. Each year, BIMF brings together friends, families, and visitors in a joyful celebration of music and culture, but it also presents challenges, particularly in terms of waste management.

With food vendors, campers, and concert-goers generating a large volume of recyclables—think aluminum cans, plastic bottles, and cardboard—it's crucial that we do our part to minimize waste and protect the stunning Lake Michigan shoreline that we cherish. Overflowing bins can lead to litter, impacting the natural beauty we all love and increasing costs associated with waste transport. To tackle this, we're thrilled to announce the introduction of recycling bins strategically placed across vendor areas, campgrounds, and performance spaces at the festival.

**These bins aren't just a solution; they're a commitment to:**

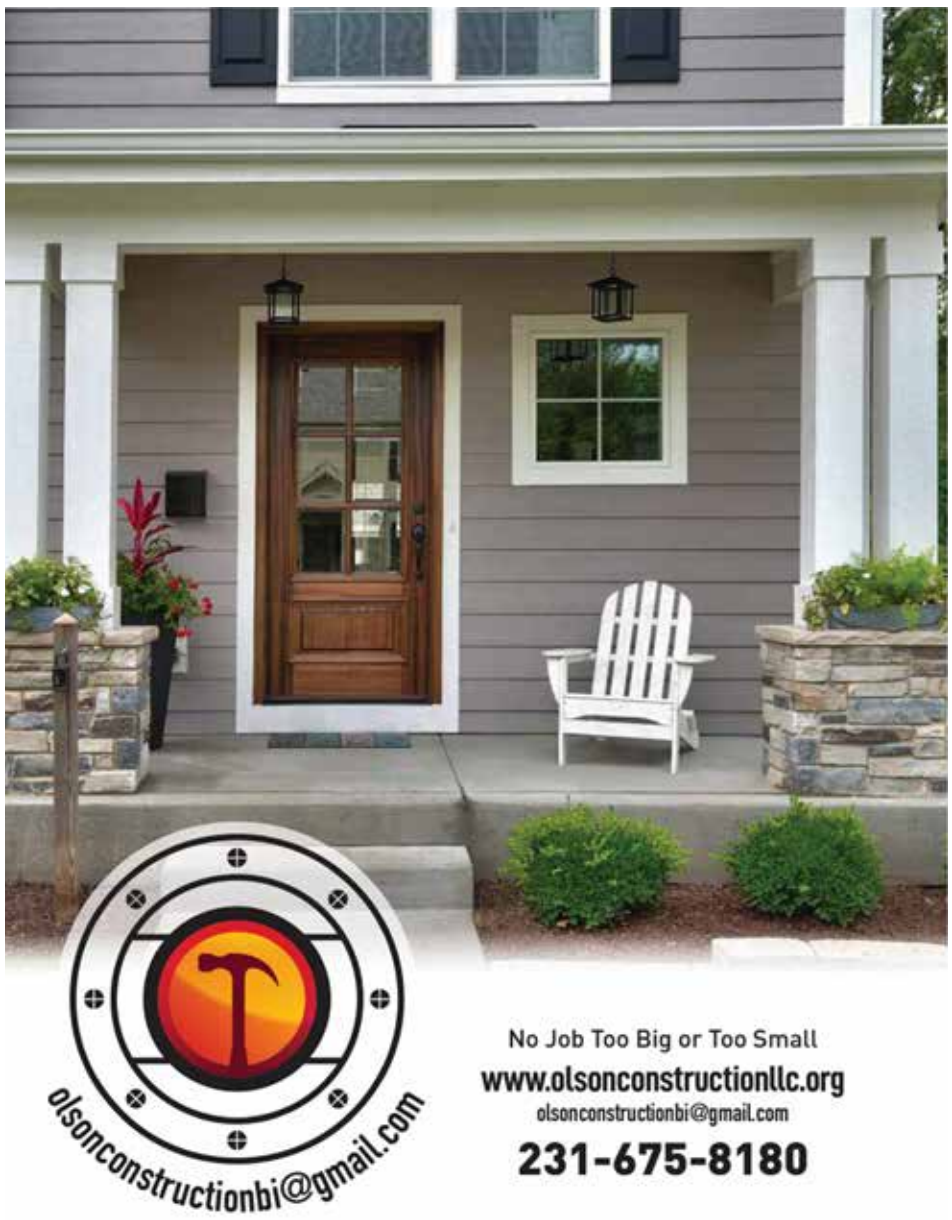
- Capture recyclables before they find their way to landfills.
- Reduce shoreline litter and safeguard Lake Michigan's pristine waters.
- Model sustainable behavior for our thousands of attendees.
- Support youth programming, helping to weave sustainability into the very fabric of our festival culture.

We are immensely grateful to the Charlevoix Community Foundation's Geographical Enrichment cycle and an anonymous donor for funding this project, ensuring that BIMF reflects our commitment to stewardship and sustainability for future generations.

As we prepare for the festival, we invite you—our friends, neighbors, and fellow festival-goers—to contribute to the Beaver Island Enrichment Fund. Your donations will amplify our efforts, allowing us to create a positive impact on Beaver Island.

**Donate Here:**
*https://cthreef.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1082*

Let's come together not just for the music, but for a shared vision of a cleaner, greener future. Together, we can set a powerful example, showing that fun and responsibility can go hand in hand. We can't wait to see you at BIMF!



# THE STORIES BEHIND THE NAMES OF ISLANDERS LOST ON THE GREAT LAKES

*By Connie Wojan*

*The following article is a part of an ongoing series based on Islanders listed on the Great Lakes Memorial.*

"He was the one who drowned under peculiar circumstances.'' This comment, which appears in Beaver Island historian Helen Collar's census research notes, refers to William Gibson, 34, who drowned on August 13, 1885, with fishing partner and first cousin Edward Gallagher. It probably came from the musing of one of the many elderly residents whom Helen interviewed to collect oral history about early Island families. According to George Broder, Helen's grandson, she put her neighbors at ease by gleaning information from unrecorded conversations over tea in their homes beginning in the 1940s. After leaving her hosts' kitchen tables, she would rush home to make handwritten notes from memory. Thankfully, these priceless records have been preserved on the Central Michigan University website. I was disappointed to find no other sources which confirm or explain what these "peculiar circumstances" might have been.

What we do know is that William was born in New York in 1857, the son of Jas and Jeanne Gibson who came from Scotland. Census records show William's parents arrived on the "Star of the West" on April 13, 1850 and were living in New York in 1860. William was the youngest of five siblings and his father's occupation was "laborer." At the age of 13, in 1870, William was still living in New York City, now an apprentice and a border in another household. (At a time of large families and small houses, older children often left home at an early age.) There are no records of William's parents ever living on Beaver Island.

William Gibson married Rose Ann Boyle, daughter of William and Hannah Malloy Boyle. William and Hannah were born in Ireland and married in Toronto, Canada. Census records show the family living on Beaver Island by 1860. William Boyle was known on Beaver Island as, "Whiskey" Boyle, a nick name that referenced his occupation as a tavernkeeper. By 1870 Rose Ann had seven siblings, including a sister named Margaret. It is possible that William and Hannah lived on Beaver Island continuously until their deaths in the 1890s as both are buried in Holy Cross Cemetery.

Their daughter Rose Ann's marriage took place on October 25, 1877. Her husband, William Gibson, was 27, and Rose Ann, 20. By 1880, the couple was living in their own household with two children. At the time of William Gibson's drowning in 1885 the couple had four children aged 2-6 years.

So once again in this series we have a widow with multiple young children left with no husband to support her. As discussed previously in this series, during the 1800s, widows often remarried quickly, sent older children to live elsewhere, or moved back in with their parents. So which of these difficult choices did Rose Ann make after losing her breadwinner on August 13, 1885? I could find no answers due to her absence from any public or family records after 1880.

William's fishing partner, Edward Gallagher, who was single, did not leave behind any descendants. He was born on Beaver Island, in 1863, the fourth of six children of Bryan and Catherine Gallagher. Holy Cross Church records show them as parish members in 1864. As of 1880 the family had grown to eight children. Edward, however, was out of the house at the age of 17 boarding with Patrick Kelly on Hog Island. At some unknown date Edward's parents moved to Manistique. (Helen Collar CMU papers). Edward was only 22 at the time of his death. We can conclude that his body was never recovered as "Find a Grave" states "no burial details" and Holy Cross Cemetery has no record of his grave.

To be continued. For clues to what became of Rose Ann and William's children please stay tuned to the next issue of the Northern Islander.

To access Helen Collar papers go to:
*cmich.edu/research/clark-historical-library*

# ROB KERN BAPTIZED AT LIGHTHOUSE POINT

*By Marilyn Duda*

On Sunday, August 31, 2025, Rob Kern was baptized in Lake Michigan just off Lighthouse Point. Approximately three dozen people were gathered to celebrate with him on Sheldon & Pat Anderson's beach. Rev. Lee Bracey spoke and officiated over serving communion. Rob was baptized by Larry Roy with Ben Fogg assisting. It was a beautiful time of encouragement for Rob making his faith in Jesus Christ known to all.

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# NEWS FROM THE BEAVER ISLAND COMMUNITY CENTER

**A SEASON OF LIGHT, MUSIC, AND COMMUNITY**

As winter settles over the island and the days grow shorter, the Beaver Island Community Center turns into one of the coziest places in town—a warm, familiar space to gather, see friends, and celebrate the season together. December brings some of our favorite traditions, along with a few special events that highlight the talent and heart of this community.

Below are the month's highlights. Details on our regular programs and any schedule updates can always be found on the Community Calendar at biccenter.org.

**HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS – DECEMBER 6**

We're kicking off the season with an evening that has a little something for everyone:

**4:00–5:30 PM – Here Comes Santa Claus**
Bring the kids to the Community Center for pictures with Santa and cookie decorating. All supplies are provided, and families are welcome to drop in anytime during this window.
**5:30–6:00 PM – Tree Lighting Ceremony**
We'll step outside for our annual tree lighting ceremony at the town Christmas tree, complete with carol singing and a special tradition: one child will be chosen to "pull the switch" and light the tree. Kids can enter the drawing by dropping their name in our magic gift box in the lobby.
**6:00–7:00 PM – Home for the Holidays Concert**
We'll head back inside for Home for the Holidays, a concert of Christmas favorites by the Stay Happy Band. It's a relaxed, festive way to ease into the season with neighbors and friends.

**BAROQUE ON BEAVER: CANDLELIT CHRISTMAS – DECEMBER 17**

Baroque on Beaver returns for a special Candlelit Christmas concert, featuring a string quartet surrounded by candles on the Community Center stage. Expect an intimate evening of seasonal classics and beautiful arrangements in a softly lit setting that feels just right for December (check biccenter.org for final time and details).

**TUNES HOLIDAY RECITAL – DECEMBER 18 AT 7:00 PM**

Come celebrate the hard work and heart TUNES students have poured into their music this fall. The TUNES Holiday Recital will feature:

- Piano, guitar, fiddle, drums, mandolin, and saxophone
- Performances from students of all ages
- A special appearance from Ruby John and the 2nd–6th grade fiddle crew

This event is a wonderful chance to cheer on our island's talent and enjoy the heart (and bravery!) of live student performances. Admission is free; all are welcome.

**LET'S GET QUIZZICAL! TRIVIA – DECEMBER 9 & 30 AT 6:00 PM**

We're closing out the year with not one but two rounds of our popular Let's Get Quizzical! Trivia Night. Gather a team (up to six people) or join one when you arrive. Expect lighthearted competition and plenty of laughs. You might even learn something new. Pre-registration is appreciated—visit biccenter.org or stop by the front desk for details.

As we look back on the year, we're amazed by how much this community has grown. More than 47,000 visits were recorded in 2024, a 21% increase from 2023 and nearly 50% more than in 2022. That incredible energy allowed us to expand our concerts, movies, senior programs, exercise classes, youth activities, and WVBI coverage. With that growth comes a deeper need for community partnership; nearly half of our operating income comes from fundraising. Community support keeps our programs accessible and our doors open to everyone without millage or tax funding. If the BIC Center has been a warm, welcoming space for you or your family, we invite you to consider a year-end gift to help us continue serving the island in the months ahead.

We're grateful for everyone who has walked through the Community Center doors this year—whether to see a show, attend a family event, volunteer, take a class, or simply visit with friends in the lobby. This building is more than a venue; it's a place where stories, traditions, and relationships take root, and where neighbors become part of one another's lives.

We hope you'll stop in this December, warm up a bit, and share the season with us.

BIC Center
BEAVER ISLAND COMMUNITY CENTER
HOURS: MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY 9 AM TO 7 PM • SATURDAY 11 AM TO 7 PM
LET'S GET QUIZZICAL!
DECEMBER 9 & 30
6:00 PM
TRIVIA NIGHT
RESERVE YOUR SEAT AT STORE.BICCENTER.ORG
TUNE IN TO WVBI'S COMMUNITY CALENDAR WEEKDAYS AT 9, NOON, 3, AND 6 OR VISIT CALENDAR. WVBI.NET
WVBI 91.9 FM
The Voice of Beaver Island
Discover WINTER on BEAVER ISLAND
HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
An Island Community Christmas
DECEMBER 6
4:00 - 5:30 PM
HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS
5:30 - 6:00 PM
TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY
6:00 PM
THE STAY HAPPY BAND
CONCERT
We're grateful to be at the Heart of a Good Community
Your support keeps our doors open and our programs thriving. Please consider a year-end gift to help us keep the BIC Center warm and welcoming for our community.
Visit biccenter.org/donate

# ST JAMES TOWNSHIP'S STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL OUTCOMES - PART I

*By Bobbi Welke, St. James Township Supervisor*

St. James Township's 2024-2034 Strategic Plan was adopted on January 10, 2024. The plan's mission and goals are noted below, followed by planned actions. There are 10 action items based on the theme of Safety, Recreation and Natural Resources, and Community. Given the amount of information to be shared with our community, this article is the first of two that will be shared with you via the Northern Islander. This report covers Safety.

**MISSION:** Maintain and enhance the unique sense of place, including creating a safe walkable community and protecting unique natural features and open spaces that attracts people to St James Township and makes it a special place to visit and reside.

**GOAL 1:** Deliver on the Island Master Plan and Emergency Operations Plans as well as the Township's Capital Improvement Plan and Parks and Recreation Plan, ordinances, policies, plans, and initiatives that preserves, protects, maintains, and enhances the assets that create St. James Township's unique sense of place.

**GOAL 2:** Support and encourage economic development activities that create job growth and enhance the Township's unique and vibrant character. This includes creating affordable housing options, supporting the establishment of fiber to the home, and improving the Island's energy efficiency.

**GOAL 3:** Use this strategic plan to fund the activities needed to accomplish this mission and achieve these goals and actions, including effective use of all revenues and grant funding opportunities. Deliver on a building a better budget.

**ACTIONS:**

1. Safety: Work to keep hazard management plans and emergency operations plans relevant to the Island community.

   Report: The work of the Township Planning Commission during the 2024/2025 period along, with support from a grant funded planning consultant, continues to update the Township Zoning Ordinances. These updates address hazard mitigation strategies. While the updates have been completed and are being processed for public comment, work on the updated zoning map continues. Once the updated zoning map is finalized, the planning commission will host a 63-day public comment period followed by a public hearing. After a review by the county planning commission, the final zoning ordinances/map will be presented to the township board for approval and enactment.

   Based on lessons learned during our response and recovery to the March 29-30 ice storm, the Emergency Services Authority is working to better articulate major incident procedures. The Sheriff's Department, with fiscal support from the Fire Department Auxiliary is purchasing a drone with impressive functionality to help with land and water rescue response. The Sheriff's office will release additional details when the drone is ready for operations.

2. Safety: Ensure medical and fire services are available.

   Report: Community millages continue to support the operations of the Beaver Island Rural Health Center, EMS, and the Fire Department. The work of the Fire Department Auxiliary is an outstanding resource for funding special needs for each of the community's emergency services, including the Sheriff's Department.

   An EMS training program, held January – June 2025, is increasing the island's number of Medical First Responders. Certification testing has been underway for the candidates to become qualified to join EMS operations. Greater efforts to seek insurance reimbursement for air and ground ambulance runs has produced greater payments to EMS.

   Consideration for reducing future EMS millage amounts is underway. One caution in regard to this consideration is that the number of 911 calls have increased, with record numbers of ground/air runs set in 2025. As of 11/17/25, there have been 144 ground and 86 air runs. Emergency response costs continue to increase and insurance coverage rates do not increase with this same rate.

3. Safety: Maximize traffic and parking opportunities in the downtown area.

   Report: The pavement markings for parking purposes were placed in 2024 and will be maintained as needed. When the BIBCO ferries arrive, at the request of township officials, in an attempt to reduce congestion, the boat company placed right turn only signs on their driveways for exiting traffic to exit north onto Main Street. Township officials continue to discuss parking issues within the downtown area and at sunset curve at Donegal Bay. Property survey work has been completed at this curve for an engineer to assess operational improvements.

   *In the January 2026 Northern Islander edition, the below seven items will be covered in a Part II article.*

4. Recreation/Natural Resources: Support recreation that maximizes our unique natural resources including the development and operations of marine and land recreation, walking, biking, and ski trails, and opportunities for night/dark sky recreation.

5. Recreation/Natural Resources: Ensure our natural resources are protected and enhanced with protection of threatened and endangered species, wildlife, sensitive natural communities, and continued Invasive Species control and avoidance of wood movement.

6. Recreation/Natural Resources: Continue and enhance efforts that protect, preserve, and enhance the Township's outstanding surface and groundwater quality.

7. Community: Support efforts to minimize blight and litter through waste management measures and ordinance enforcement, and other activities that reflect the character of the community.

8. Community: Coordinate plans, policies, and ordinances that create a range of housing options and affordability throughout the Township, with a focus on affordable, workforce, critical care worker, and senior housing, as well as short-term and long-term housing.

9. Community: Support efforts establishing fiber to the home and improving the Island's energy efficiency.

10. Community: Deliver on building a better budget that is structurally sound and considers multiple year budgeting and future forecasting. Organize fiscal policies and procedures. Support training in building better budgets.

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# CHARLEVOIX COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SYNOPSIS - OCTOBER 22, 2025

*Submitted by Kim Garver*

The Charlevoix County Board of Commissioners met in the Charlevoix County Commissioners room on October 22, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. Five Commissioners were present. Absent: Commissioner Kenney.

Motion approved the agenda, as amended.

Motion approved the consent agenda, as presented.

Motion approved Resolution #25-139, Grandvue Operating Transfer.

Motion approved the reappointment of Tory Thrush to the Department of Health and Human Services Board.

Motion approved Resolution #25-140, 2025 Apportionment Report.

Motion approved Resolution #25-141, CDBG Urgent Need Program Grant.

Motion approved Resolution #25-142, 2026 Emergency Management Performance Grant Work Agreement/Quarterly Report.

Motion approved Resolution #25-143, Agreement for NLEA Services.

Motion approved Resolution #25-144, Jail NMRE Application for Funds.

Motion approved Resolution #25-145, Remonumentation Surveyor Contracts.

Motion approved Resolution #25-146, Opt-Out Resolution PA 152 of 2011 for the 2026 Benefit Year.

Motion approved Resolution #25-147, Resolution Regarding Charlevoix County Support for Phase 4/5 of the Boyne City to Charlevoix Non Motorized Trail.

The meeting was adjourned to the call of the Chair at 6:39 p.m. Complete copies of the Board minutes can be found on the County website, www.charlevoixcounty.org.

*Julia A. Drost, County Clerk*

# CHARLEVOIX COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SYNOPSIS - NOVEMBER 12, 2025

*Submitted by Kim Garver*

The Charlevoix County Board of Commissioners met in the Charlevoix County Commissioners room on November 12, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. Five Commissioners were present.
Excused: Commissioner Christensen.

Motion approved the agenda, as amended.

Motion approved the consent agenda, as presented.

Motion approved Resolution #25-148, County Expenditures.

Motion approved to move the regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners nightly meeting from December 24, 2025, to Tuesday December 23, 2025.

Motion approved to accept Eliza Hensel's resignation from the Charlevoix County Materials Management Planning Committee.

Motion approved to appoint Sarah Roy to the Charlevoix County Materials Management Planning Committee.

Motion approved to close the damaged section of the Wheelway bike trail effective this afternoon, and to approve the Agreement for Professional Services with Manchin Engineering for a structural inspection in the amount of $10,800.

Motion approved Resolution #25-149, Beaver Island Meal Program Beachcomber Agreement.

Motion approved Resolution #25-150, A Resolution to Accept Donation of Money or Property to Charlevoix County.

Motion approved Resolution #25-151, Circuit Court Jury & Conference Room Chair Purchase.

Motion approved Resolution #25-152, Whiting Park Storage Container.

Motion approved Resolution #25-153, Whiting Park Campsite #6 Repair.

Motion approved Resolution #25-154, Prosecutor's Desktop Computer Purchase.

Motion approved Resolution #25-155, Maintenance Transit Van, as amended.

Commissioner Hankins moved to go into closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268 Section 8(h) at 10:29 a.m., seconded by Commissioner Chamberlain.

The meeting was adjourned to the call of the Chair at 10:51 a.m. Complete copies of the Board minutes can be found on the County website, www.charlevoixcounty.org.

*Julia A. Drost, County Clerk*

# REMEMBERING HARRIET ANNE HARTESVELT NELSON

*Submitted by Ann Dill and Family*

Harriet Anne Hartesvelt Nelson peacefully departed this life on October 23, 2025. Born in Grand Rapids in 1925 to Peter Andrew Hartesvelt and Anna Katherine Gies Hartesvelt, Harriet lived the better part of the past century within a few square miles of her childhood home. Her elder brother Richard "Dick" (Jane Loeks Hartesveldt) was an ecologist who contributed greatly to the conservation of the giant sequoia, and her younger brother Louis "Lou" (survived by Liz Yeaw Hartesvelt of Suttons Bay) was a dentist in the U.S. Public Health Service and private practice.

Harriet graduated from Grand Rapids South High School in 1943, excelling in French and memorizing poetry, and matriculated at the University of Michigan—the second of four generations of Wolverines in the family—graduating in 1947 with her bachelor's in English. After college, she returned home to teach junior high school before meeting Raymond Lindley Nelson.

Harriet and Ray were married on April 8, 1950, at Burton Heights Methodist Church. Ray's own time spent as a dentist in the U.S. Public Health Service took them to Falls Church, Chicago, and Hawaii, before they returned to Grand Rapids.

The Nelsons have three children: Bruce Raymond (Linda), whose career as a commercial airline pilot mirrored Harriet's love of travel, Ann Katherine (Kenneth Dill), who carried on her mom's interest in playing the piano and other creative pursuits, and Susan (Harry Hutchins), whose path as a biology teacher knit together a few strands of their family story. Together, the family found harmony in walking the beach at their cabin on Beaver Island, campfires and pitching tipis, and travel-trailer adventures across the country.

Following Ray's untimely passing, Harriet made her way independently as a retiree. She traveled as far as Alaska, Thailand, and the Galapagos Islands, enjoyed golf, bowling, and endless puzzles with friends, and cherished her grand-motherhood to Andrew Dill, Charles Dill, Tyler Hutchins, and Holly Hutchins. It was an especially favorite time for Harriet when games, friends, and family mingled during her summers on Beaver Island.

In her later years, Scrabble morphed into Words With Friends, and days at the cabin became evenings of laughter over weekly FaceTime calls on her iPad. She enjoyed the friends she made during her later years living at Beacon Hill at Eastgate, and as a deeply admired member of their community and its first resident, she enjoyed certain privileges, including the first cut of cake at parties. Recently, Harriet's family and friends joined her for her 100th birthday party, a celebration featuring slide shows from the past century, trivia about her life (she came in second after Ann), and some very nice Scotch whisky.

Quick-witted and deeply sure of herself, Harriet brought laughter and honesty wherever she went, never hesitating with clever remarks or her straightforward opinions. Her humor was matched by a steady self-assurance and an unfaltering, effortless acceptance of others, and she genuinely embraced each person's individuality with warmth and kindness. In remembering Harriet, her quiet demeanor, her care-filled conversation, and abiding gentleness, one might also call to mind a line from Emerson's essay on *Experience*, which she had heavily underlined in her copy: "All good conversation, manners, and action, come from a spontaneity which forgets ceremony, and makes the moment great."

In lieu of flowers or other memorials, Harriet would have appreciated your contributions to the Beaver Island Conservancy (www.beaverislandconservancy.org) c/o Michigan Environmental Council, 602 W. Ionia Street, Lansing, MI 48933.

# HONORING GREG FARMER

*Submitted by Elizabeth Farmer and Family*

You may remember Greg Farmer as the man with the Polaroid camera around his neck and a mug of coffee in his hand. Every August he came to the island and drove a red pickup truck with his loyal dog, Eddie, in the passenger seat. He loved taking Polaroids of passersby and giving them the pictures. He took hundreds of photos that he never kept—of tourists, native Islanders, and his friends and family. Greg began visiting Beaver Island as a child in the 1970s and continued the tradition with his family starting in the early 2010s. He always stayed at the same place: Isle Haven, where they eventually rented out all four units to fit family and friends. He even lived briefly on the island near the airport. He drove the entirety of the island every summer, exploring each nook and cranny. He made friends among fishermen and mechanics. He loved catching the sunset at Donegal Bay and walking among the stones in the Circle Drive area. His love for the island and its history was among the most profound of his life.

Gregory Campbell Farmer died on October 24 in his home, in the company of his beloved canine companion, Eddie, who followed him shortly after. He leaves behind his three children, Katie, Maggie (Basil), and Betsy (Sarah); his nephew, Forrest (Linnea) and their children Leeland, Olivia, and Eleanor; and his siblings, Ned, Kate, and Andy.

He was a student of history, a phenomenal cook, and a keen-eyed photographer. His gallery of art remains on the walls, and his garden is sleeping ahead of the next planting season. Next time you drive to Donegal Bay, think of him in his truck, all his kids loaded in the back and his dog at his side. His pictures may be among you—in frames or tucked into wallets, a sliver of time and feeling. We hope those on the island may remember him as he remembered the island: a thing of beauty and depth, leaving a mark on every soul he encountered.

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